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Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Abbreviations -- Preface -- 1 Introduction: The Critics and Some Problems of Meaning -- 2. Intertextuality, Indirection, and Indeterminacy -- 3. Fictional Consciousness and the Author's Voice -- 4. Tragedy: Theory, Form, and Meaning -- 5. Exiled from Light: Sin, Regeneration, the Hero of Faith -- 6. Samson and Dalila: Love and Marriage -- 7. Samson: Divine Impulsion in the Hero of Faith, Charity, and the Imitation of Christ -- 8. The Structure of Samson Agonistes -- 9. Milton and Politics in Old Age -- Epilogue -- Appendix -- Notes -- Works Consulted -- Index of Biblical Citations -- Index of Citations from the Works of John Milton -- General Index
Sommario/riassunto	Despite considerable general disagreement about the meaning of Milton's Samson Agonistes, literary critics have largely come to view, Samson, as a saintly Christian hero, with attending themes of election, conversion and regeneration. In a challenge to this dominant interpretation, Derek Wood proposes that Milton's protagonist is

actually an emblematic embodiment of Old Testament consciousness as a rigorous, incomplete, literalistic and uncomprehending, fashioned by the old Mosaic Law, without the amelioration of Christ's charity and forgiveness. Wood begins by surveying and evaluating the critical literature on Samson Agonistes of the past fifty years, then challenges these readings through a comprehensive textual and formal analysis. He argues for a thorough understanding of Aristotle's theory of tragedy, in which Milton's practice was anchored and draws cogently on early modern European commentaries as well as contemporary re-evaluations of Aristotle's Poetics to clarify Milton's approach. Wood's contribution reconciles the orthodox interpretation of Samson as a Christian saint with the revisionist emphasis on his murderous brutality. The author's analysis corrects a number of errors made by previous Milton scholars, shows how Dalila has been consistently misread and decodes the politics of the tragedy in the context of Milton's final years as an aging, failed revolutionary.

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